

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 12097 070853Z

13

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO USDOC WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 312

UNCLAS TEHRAN 12097

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BENC IR

SUBJ: METHANOL PLANT ON BARGE

REF USDOC 20393

1. EMBOFF TALKED WITH DR. MOVAHED ABOUT POTENTIAL METHANOL PROJECT AND LEARNED THAT, ALTHOUGH NIOC IS STILL INTERESTED AND MILDLY OPTIMISTIC, PLANS ARE STILL AT A RUDIMENTARY STAGE. NIOC IS WILLING TO EXPLORE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES WITH COPS, INCLUDING INTER-ALIS JOINT-VENTURE ARRANGEMENT OR CONTRACTUAL RELATION BY WHICH COPS WOULD PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND MARKETING SERVICES. COMMENT: IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM REF IF COPS IS INTERESTED IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN SELLING THE BARGE MOUNTED PLANT, BUT NIOC IS PROBABLY NOT PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATING BUYING AND OPERATING SUCH A FACILITY ON ITS OWN. END COMMENT.

2. MOVAHED BELIEVES THAT FURTHER TALKS BETWEEN COPS AND NIOC TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES AND BETTER DEFINE SHARED INTERESTS ARE NEEDED. HE SUGGESTED THAT SOMEONE (OR A TEAM) FROM COPS, INCLUDING A LAWYER IF FORMATION OF JOINT-VENTURE IS TO BE A TOPIC, VISIT TEHRAN. HOWEVER, MOVAHED ALSO MENTIONED A RECENT CABLE FROM COPS REQUESTING THAT HE OR ANOTHER NIOC REP VISIT THE U.S. FOR RENEWED TALKS, AND HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT HE WOULD GO.

3. COMMENT: NIOC IS CLEARLY NOT CHARGING AHEAD ON THIS PROJECT AND IT WOULD APPARENTLY PREFER TO RESPOND IN ITS OWN TIME AND WAY TO PROPOSALS AND INITIATIVES PUT FORWARD BY COPS. DESPITE APPARENT FEELING BY COPS THAT BALL IS IN NIOC COURT, U.S. FIRM
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WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO FOLLOW UP REPEATEDLY.

HELMS

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NNN

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